

Good morning Chairman Accavitti and members of the House Energy Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your commitment to the issue of a Renewable Energy Portfolio for Michigan.

My name is Betsy Winkelman. I chair the Michigan Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, or, MI-COEJL. We are the Jewish voice for the environment in Michigan. Our sponsors and partners include Synagogues and Temples, Detroit Jewish Community Relations Council and the Michigan Jewish Conference. We promote environmental education and action based on the Jewish tradition of caring for the earth.

MI-COEJL's roots go back to 1993 and the creation of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE), a formal alliance of major faith groups in the United States. Our roots in Jewish environmental values go back thousands of years, to the dawn of history! Foremost among our caring for the earth principles is BAL TASHCHIT or DO NOT DESTROY. This principle teaches us that "No living thing, not even a mustard seed, is so insignificant that it may be destroyed without reasonable cause." (Aaron Ha-Levi, Sefer HaChinuch)

Bal Tashchit, refers to Deuteronomy 12:19, the prohibition against destruction of fruit trees during wartime. This has been interpreted as a prohibition against the destruction of the environment, including the needless waste of anything, from food to fuels.

Our energy problem is enormous. Consider these three things about energy in Michigan:

1) We import most of our fuel for electricity at a cost of over \$20 billion each year.

Ka-ching, do you hear the sound of all that money leaving our state?

2) Coal represents 57% of that fuel, to the tune of 35,000,000 imported tons a year.

3) And most disturbing! 100 tons of coal lasts only 20 minutes fueling a power plant!

If we are commanded to care for the simple mustard seed, how much more must we care for the mountains of Appalachia. The mining of this coal is devastating the land from which it is wrenched. The mountains disappear, the rivers are poisoned and the people's lives are irreparably disrupted. All this to feed today's gluttonous demand for electricity. Just because we don't see that devastation doesn't mean we aren't responsible for it.

Was it our intention to be so ruthlessly destructive? I don't believe so. Before us is a priceless opportunity to reverse such destructive actions, for right here in Michigan we have wind and sun to harness. A strong Renewable Portfolio Standard is the jumpstart needed to get us on the road to clean, renewable, sustainable Made In Michigan Energy! We have the moral and ethical imperative to demand the highest level of sustainable performance from our utility companies. Therefore, MI-COEJL supports HB 4539, and HB 4562 with the understanding that the '25% by 2025 goal' language is firm.

This committee has a serious responsibility and the people of Michigan expect you to do the right thing. Don't squander this opportunity, you will be held accountable.

"The Lord took the first human and passing before all the trees of the Garden of Eden, said, 'See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you'." Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13